

PLAYS and the News of the STAGE

'THE TWO ORPHANS' IS COMING INTO NEW LIFE IN PICTURES

Griffith's Announcement of Filming of Famous Play Recalls Its Distinguished History—Tragedians Continue to Pick on Shakespeare.

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

RECENT failure of melodrama has been attributed, possibly with truth, to the undeniable ability of the cinema to do the thing so much better. The spectacular wonders possible to the stage are negligible when it comes to the power of the screen to thrill with all the perils possible on sea and land.

"Sealed Instructions," which was W. A. Brady's latest attempt at imported melodrama was not inferior to its predecessor on the stage of the Manhattan Opera House. The public had, however, been spoiled by the picture plays and their stirring episodes. For the same reason Langdon McCormick's noisy "An American Ace" brought no good fortune to A. H. Woods when it was seen and heard most audibly at the Casino.

Now the repertoire of the picture theatre and D. W. Griffith is to be increased by a new kind of melodrama which does not owe its half century, more or less, of active stage life to its material sensations. "The Two Orphans" never depended on paint and canvas for its power over the thousands that sat in breathless suspense under its unfolding scenes. It worked its spell under the humblest conditions. Recently it has been acted here only by the modest Italian companies that find shelter in this or that Bowery temple of art when the politics of the inexorable burlesque wheel decide the theatre must close its doors. If the Yiddish muse seems to tolerate its crudities, her Italian sister moves in with very little baggage. Certainly the stock company which performed the famous old play in the early spring could not garnish the drama extravagantly.

It never needed such extraneous decoration, although managers were in the old days accustomed to plunge on the scene of the chevalier's fête. Of course "The Two Orphans" was more effective when it was engaging the talents of capable actors. It was easy for any actor to appear moderately capable, however, in the plays that Adolphe d'Ennery wrote. His scenes acted themselves. They made, in other words, their impressions when there were plausible figures to speak the text. Skill could undoubtedly embellish its progress, but it was not indispensable.

In Distinguished Hands.

The drama happened to fall into distinguished hands when it was first played at the Union Square Theatre. Of course Charles Thorne, Kitty Blanchard, Marie Wilkins, Charles Parselle, and McKee Rankin are only names now in the history of the American stage. Yet Kate Claxton and F. F. Mackay, who were notable in the first cast are alive although no longer active in their profession. The fame of Miss Claxton is inseparable from the history of the melodrama.

She could not understand indeed why she should sit in a box at the New Amsterdam Theatre when the play had its last notable revival in New York instead of appearing as the blind heroine. But the manager had selected Grace George, who gave a most engaging performance of the role. Some other notable actors were in this highly successful attempt to revive interest in the old work. Clara Morris made her last appearance in New York in "The Two Orphans" when she was 90 years old. Some of her associates were in this highly successful attempt to revive interest in the old work. Clara Morris made her last appearance in New York in "The Two Orphans" when she was 90 years old. Some of her associates were in this highly successful attempt to revive interest in the old work.

Adolphe d'Ennery was 90 years old when the famous old work was acted in Paris for the first time. From its first hearing the piece made theatre history. England seems to have been less cordial to it than other lands, but it took firm root in every Continental soil. Here it was given for years, and in all of its most notable productions Miss Claxton played the role of the heroine.

Singularly enough the Italian theatre knew the drama for years under the title "The Secret Archives of the City of Paris." Here the Italians have always played it under the usual name. The playwrights of course d'Ennery and the Italian collaborator—did more than build an extremely effective drama for its day. They selected wonderfully picturesque characters in the wandering sisters themselves, the dissipated cavalier, the honest scoundrel, the villainous Frochard and the proud countess. There was little or no indication of character in these figures so skilfully manipulated by the dramatists, but they were varied and highly colored. In the skilful hands of D. W. Griffith the old play ought to know a glorious celluloid resurrection.

Why Pick on Shylock?

If any statistician is sufficiently industrious to tabulate the Shakespearean performances of the winter of the popularity of "The Merchant of Venice" will probably be as surprising as the vitality of the play under the frequency of the attacks on it. Every actor, once the Shakespearean has begun to buzz around, prepares to descend on this luckless play. Only its innate immortality has enabled it to survive these vicious attacks. The going for the poor old play was pretty hard last winter. Fritz Leiber's altogether respectable season at the Lexington Theatre brought the play to its first hearing of the year. Then Rudolf Schildkraut gave his vivid and picturesque conception of the usurer in Yiddish.

The play certainly looked groggy after Edward Vroom gave a single matinee at the Cort Theatre which set new standards for incompetent performances of Shakespeare in New York. But it recovered in time for the Waldmann-Walker revival at the Longacre Theatre and appeared in the repertoire of Walter Hampden's season at the New York City Theatre.

formed here in years by different actors struggling to establish themselves in this repertoire.

Is it the most popular drama in this famous list? If it were possible to obtain the statistics concerning its representations during the ages the results would doubtless justify an affirmative answer. Yet there are other reasons for its popularity today. The characters may be reduced in number until no more than a dozen are necessary.

The scenic demands, unless the producers desire to make them otherwise, are simple. The action may be condensed to keep the play within the limits of a brief representation. Then managers who are usually too contemptuous of Shakespeare to discuss the business value of the drama are generally willing to agree that "The Merchant of Venice" will "draw" if any of them will. No play, less certainly the creation of a genius, could ever withstand the repeated assaults made on it. What other play, for instance, could have survived its experience this season? Can its greatness be denied after such an experience?

NOVELTIES AT SEASIDE AND SUBURBAN RESORTS

Luna Park continues to be a rendezvous for thousands, with its many new rides and other features, its daring acrobats and its animal acts in the free circus. Arthur Pryor's Band in its concerts is one of the distinctive offerings of the resort.

Everything is ready at George C. Tilyou's Steeplechase Park, Coney Island, for Circus Day, which will take place on Wednesday, when ten thousand children from the various institutions of the city will be the guests of the management of the park. They will be conveyed to and from Coney Island in motor cars which have been donated for the occasion. Bimbo, the smallest clown in the world, has a complete set of new tricks to show the young visitors. A luncheon will be given for the children, at which the general manager, Edward F. Tilyou, will play host. Though toy balloons have arrived at the park so that each of the little visitors will take home a souvenir of the day at Coney.

Harold Stern, musical director at the new Ambassador Hotel, has been engaged for the entire season at the Brighton Beach Baths. His band of twenty pieces will give concerts twice daily, afternoon and evening, at the seaside resort. Mr. Stern began his programme for the summer yesterday afternoon.

Real sea water surf bathing is now an added feature of the sports at Palisades Amusement Park, and a brand new ocean was lifted from the Atlantic yesterday in which thousands of aquatic sports enjoyed their first plunge of the season.

The Decoration Day weekend at Starlight Amusement Park on the Bronx River was featured by the opening of the bathing pool yesterday with Helen Sube starting the season with her spectacular high dive. The initiation of the new athletic field will be started with a game of baseball to-day, and the introduction of a larger vaudeville bill than usual will be made on the open air stage to-morrow, including the Three Weldons, double revolving perch act; Miss Velda in an aerial trapeze performance and Florence Duo, comedy acrobats.

'Dreamy Eyes' to Be Tried in Brooklyn

William A. Brady will present for the first time at the Majestic Theatre this week "Dreamy Eyes," a new American comedy by Martha M. Stanley and Adelaide Matthews. It deals with the advent into a New York household of a young woman from the West with deeply grounded beliefs. Prominent in the cast will be Misses Jane Grey and Fairs Hiney, Leonard Wiley and John Cromwell.

D. W. Griffith's latest picture, "Dream Street," will be presented at the Shubert-Crescent Theatre, starting to-day, in conjunction with the talking movies. "Frisco" will be the headline at the Orpheum. "Edith Cox," "The Thirteen Strands" and Kate Elinore and Sam Williams will be other attractions.

John Hyams and Lella McIntyre will top the bill at the Bushwick. Henry Santley and his syncopated band will be the featured act at the Boro Park.

His Edward's song revue will be the chief offering at the New Brighton. Charles Ray in "Scrap Iron" will be the principal photoplay at the Strand.

"Snapshots of 1921" and "Gold" Here

MONDAY.

SELWYN THEATRE.—The Selwyn will launch their plan of a revue as an annual summer event for Selwyn Theatre with "Snapshots of 1921," which they will produce in association with Lew Fields, with a company of entertainers headed by Miss Nora Bayes, Lew Fields and De Wolf Hopper. The cast further includes George McKay, Miss Lulu McConnell, Miss Delyle Alda, Miss Gilda Gray, Ernest Lambert and Carl Hysom. It will be presented in fourteen elaborate scenes, which will reveal satires, musical episodes and specialties. Sketches were written for it by Miss Frances Nesbitt, James Montgomery Flagg, H. I. Phillips and Glen MacDonough. Alex Graber, Ray Goetz and George Gershwin are responsible for the lyrics, while Mel Franklin and George Gershwin have written the music.

WEDNESDAY.

FRAZEE THEATRE.—John D. Williams will produce Eugene O'Neill's second long play, "Gold." The chief part will be played by Willard Mack. Others in the cast will be George Marion, Miss Geraldine O'Brien, Miss Katherine Grey and E. J. Ballantine. It is in four acts, and its atmosphere, as in the case of so many O'Neill plays, is of the sea. It is called a study in conscience.



Miss MARY WORTH in "The BROKEN WING" 48th STREET THEATRE.

Stadium Concerts to Begin on July 7

Victor Herbert and Henry Hadley to Be Conductors of Orchestra.

The stadium concert committee of 1921 has started a campaign to complete its \$50,000 fund. The concerts will be given every evening at the Lewisohn Stadium, College of the City of New York, beginning July 7, under the auspices of the Music League of the People's Institute. Victor Herbert and Henry Hadley will be the conductors of the orchestra. Grand opera and concert stars will be the soloists. In case of rain the concerts will be held in the great hall of City College.

More than 50,000 persons attended the concert last season. Seventy-five thousand free tickets were distributed by the Music League. This fund for which the drive now has started is to keep the concerts up to the high standards of other years.

Twelve weeks of summer concerts on the green at Columbia University will start Monday, June 6. The Goldman Concert Band, under Edwin Franko Goldman, will again please the thousands of music lovers who will gather under the trees as during the three previous seasons. The number of concerts has been considerably increased over previous years, and there will also be additional free concerts in the parks and hospitals.

For the Columbia concerts admission is by ticket only. Free season tickets may be had upon written request to Summer Concerts, Columbia University, New York City, with a self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed.

MISS SHAW IN OWN PLAYLETS.

At the Selwyn Theatre on the afternoons of June 7, 8 and 10 Miss Billie Shaw, well known as a sketch and short story writer, and as a vaudeville headliner with William Seabury, will appear with Mr. Seabury in six of her own one act plays. Each playlet will be an exposition of a different type of stage act and histrionic art. There will be a farce, a comedy, a drama, two tragedies and a novelty playlet of a Protean nature. Max Fikman is directing rehearsals.

WALT WHITMAN'S BIRTHDAY.

Walt Whitman's birthday anniversary will be celebrated next Tuesday evening at the French Institute Auditorium, 597 Fifth Avenue. The lecturer will be Dr. F. Edward Seelye. The celebration is under the auspices of the new Walt Whitman Club.



Miss GILDA GRAY in "SNAPSHOTS of 1921" Selwyn Theatre.



WILLARD MACK Who Appears in "GOLD" Frazee Theatre.

Miss ANN ANDREWS with Grant Mitchell in "The CHAMPION" Longacre.

Overman, Superior Stage Souse, Enrolled in Legion of Candor

Young Man Who Won Place as Featured Player in 'Just Married' by Gentlemanly Jag, Frank in Dressing Room Talk.

Frankness is not always to be found in a theatre dressing room, and players will tell an interviewer that they are amazed at their own virtuosity in playing the part of an egotist, for it is something so contrary to their own natures! Therefore the palm—with cross—goes to Lynne Overman, denoting that he is enrolled in the (small) Legion of Candor. For this young man, who has won a place as a featured player in "Just Married" at the Shubert by his gentlemanly jag in the first act, on being asked if he had developed the alcoholic technique for this performance from close observation of various distinguished souses, made answer in a fashion to show that anyone could have his past for the asking.

"Some years ago," he said, "I used to be just about the best little two faced drinker in the business. So in this case I've taken myself for a model—if you can call it a model. There wasn't anything I wouldn't stand up to, anywhere, and live away in my system in unlimited quantities. But the heads of this business wouldn't stand for that any more."

"In the same way my part in the second act passes off safely for all concerned because I try to play it just as any young man would act if he found himself in a strange girl's dressing room—had probably been out hurriedly, even if he took most of the door with him."



Miss EVELYN LAW and The TOMSON TWINS in "THE TWO ORPHANS" Little Blue Theatre.

Stars' Old Garb to Aid Near East Fund

Clothes Worn in Famous Characters to Be Sold at Garden Party Auction.

Frank Bacon, the veteran actor, is going to buy a new "Bill Jones" outfit. It will take the place of that suit of clothes the public has seen him wear nearly three years. When he gets the new one, the old one will not be sent to the usual limbo of discarded things but will be put to a unique philanthropic use at an auction sale of clothes worn in famous characters by theatrical stars for Near East Relief as a means of obtaining clothing for the destitute in Armenia.

Adrian J. Leslie Kincaid, State chairman of the Near East Relief, in making the announcement yesterday said that, with the cooperation of a theatrical committee of which John Drew is chairman, he will make a collection of costumes worn by well known actors and actresses and will sell them soon at a large garden party.

The idea for such an auction was the result of a visit by Gen. Kincaid to Frank Bacon, of "Lightnin'" fame, in his dressing room in the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Bacon was told of the old clothes campaign of Near East Relief, which is to culminate in a "Bundling Day" on June 6, and remarked that the Armenians "had nothing on" him.

"I've worn one suit of clothes more than 2,000 times," said Bacon, "and it's pretty threadbare now. I guess I'll have to get a new one."

"I got the hunch right there," said Gen. Kincaid. "I told Bacon that if he'd let me have that 'Bill Jones' suit I'd see the lead in the Chicago company. The remarkable collection of stage clothes ever known. Jackie Coogan isn't giving us his 'Kid' costume, which, as you know, is almost as ragged as the things the poor children over there are compelled to wear, but he's sending us a big bundle of his spare tops for our bundle day."

Mr. Drew approached David Warfield for the gift of the costume worn by him as the Music Master. Otis Skinner also will make a contribution from his wardrobe of celebrated character costumes. One of the frocks worn by Miss Carroll McCormack in "Miss Lulu Bett" has been promised.

Gen. Kincaid said that all the armories of the State will be opened on June 6 for the receipt of bundles. Tags are being distributed in churches, public and private schools and theatres. More than 2,000,000 tags, bearing the address of the Near East Relief warehouse at 5 West Thirtieth street, have been distributed.

"Conditions among the destitute of the Near East are simply frightful," said Gen. Kincaid. "Recent cable messages from relief workers show that unless America sends help, not only in the matter of food supplies, but in the way of warm clothing, thousands of persons will perish next winter."

He added that Mr. Drew's theatrical committee alone has promised to obtain 1,000,000 pounds of clothing from the private wardrobes of members of the profession.

"Klick-Klick" Stays In Vaudeville Bill

Santley and Sawyer Again at the Palace—In Other Houses.

The Four Marx Brothers will cavort again at the Palace this week in their newest skit, "On the Meszanine Floor," by Herman Tiunberg. Joseph Santley and Adeline Sawyer, with their clever supporting company, remain for a second week in "Klick-Klick," the smart spring revue staged by Hansard Short. Ciccolini tenor will be featured. Others will be William Seabury and company in "Frolics," Kramer and Boyle, Bobby McLean and company, Dotson and the three Lordons.

The chief acts at other vaudeville houses follow:

RIVERSIDE.—Miss Florence Moore, Miss Ruth Royce.

EIGHTH-EAST STREET.—Miss Jay Vello, Jackie Coogan in the photoplay, "Peck's Bad Boy."

ROYAL.—Miss Karyl Norman, Miss Valeria Bergere and company.

ALHAMBRA.—Miss Emily and Ann Wellman, "Tennessee Ten."

BROADWAY.—Seven Honey Boys, Billy Glason.

COLUMBIAN.—Courtney Sisters, Temper and Sunshin.

REGENT.—Miss Ethel Clifton, Henry and Moore.

News and Gossip of the Theatres

Negroes as Purveyors of Theatrical Entertainment—Cohan as Vagabond.

Plays with, by or of negroes seem to be coming to the fore of late. Not only was "The Emperor Jones," with the negro star, Charles Gilpin, one of the events of the season, but the organization of dusky folk took up the exposition of musical comedy in "Shuffle Along." Likewise, but much more inconspicuously, "Gone With the Wind" and other dark hued characters and had been put on last week at the Republic Theatre.

Considerable quiet was maintained about this presentation, so that scarcely anyone, in or out of the theatrical profession, knew of it. While a number of managers were present, the audience at the special matinee as a whole had been carefully selected from among laymen and was considered very select. It was put on virtually as a private enterprise by the author, Elbert Culbertson, who felt that it was worthy of a hearing before the inner circles of the city. It is not unknown as a playwright, having written "Radium" and other dramatic works.

Through his theatrical representative, Miss Mary Forrest, the aid of A. H. Woods was enlisted, and this manager donated the theatre. Woods, who presented last season "Come Seven," by Octavius Roy Cohan, which dealt farcically with colored characters and had white performers, was not interested in this production outside of allowing the use of the playhouse.

The play in this instance was acted by negro actors, mostly from the Lafayette Theatre, in Harlem. It was a straight drama, purporting to deal with certain phases of negro life in Washington, and was looked upon as rather a moral effort.

It is a likelihood that Grant Mitchell, closing his run in "The Champion" at the Longacre Theatre this week, will try out a dramatized version of Henry S. Harland's novel, "Queed," when he takes his present vehicle to Chicago this summer. This best seller of a decade ago has had rather a curious history in its journey toward the footlights.

It was once produced by a theatrical production by no fewer than four adapters. Each was at first very hopeful of putting it on, and each in turn lost his head over the project. In 1911, soon after its appearance on the book stalls, Winchell Smith obtained the dramatic rights to "Queed," became very enthusiastic over it, prepared a dramatization of it and presently dropped the plan.

Then the firm of Cohan & Harris got hold of the dramatic rights and George M. Cohan whipped it into histrionic shape. After a time he and his partner let pass one of their hands, and Brandon Tynan dramatized it and turned it adrift. Then Emery Potter, short story writer, actor and playwright, entered the scene.

He is a close friend of Grant Mitchell, and the latter has been pining for several years to do "Queed." Pot made a dramatization of it, and when Sam H. Harris heard that writer that another manager was considering having a fling at the Harrison opus, he renewed his option on the dramatic rights, taking the Potter version. Now it looks as though the book may get before an audience, just when most of the younger generation have forgotten their ever was such a novel.

Levell Sherman, until recently planning the lead in the Chicago company of "The Tavern," is the latest to come back to the Actors Equity Association, and a life member in that organization, and by leaving he follows in the steps of Miss Nora Bayes.

Speaking of "The Chorus Lady," it develops that Miss Panny Brice's vehicle in which Charles Dillingham is preparing to present her next season, will be something altogether new. Her husband, Hoffman, will write it and has already started it under way. The play will have emotional moments, but will not be solely devoted to the serious, for nothing could keep Miss Brice's sense of humor away.

It is primarily a difficulty with labels which has caused David Warfield to make the decision that he will not send "Deburan" on the road this season. The demands of the stage help and of the war have been too much for him. He has been burdened on tour that the manager has been led to forego sending his company away.

This is the first time in his experience as a manager that he has counted on his productions all over the country and is a matter that is reported to be felt keenly by him. So heavy was the burden of the stage help and of the war that Mr. Warfield will not break even financially on the production. It is another of those things which he has done for the love of the theatre.

Mr. Briscoe is not the only manager who has been experiencing labor troubles of late. One production which has been a regular feature of the theatrical season may be delayed next fall because of such embarrassments. It was at bottom difficulty over labor which forced the sudden closing of "The Three Musketeers" at the Manhattan Opera House during the past week.

One of the remarkable developments of the current season is the appearance of George M. Cohan in the role of the Vagabond in the scheduled production of "The Tavern" at the Hudson Theatre. No greater tribute or evidence of loyalty on the part of a personal following could be made. He has been a regular feature of the theatrical season since he came to it. It was to be expected that the critical would come in order to praise his performance with that which had gone before. But it was something exceptional to find the ordinary theatregoer, who attends plays primarily for the sake of enjoying them, crowding into the house and cheering the acting of the star with keen appreciation.

This is all the more unusual in view of the fact that a revival of a play, even if it has been withdrawn only a short period before, is generally followed by a slump in the attendance, for the New York public has a habit of saying to anybody that is reported, no matter how freshly, "Oh, that's old stuff." Not so with Cohan. He has raised the show to capacity, bringing thousands of new patrons after it started. With the sale mounting and seats being purchased four weeks in advance it is quite likely that the receipts will reach the \$5,000 mark, which is the high point of the Cohan era. Cohan this season performed the same feat of jumping into the leading role of one of his plays, "The Meanest Man in the World." The contrast is all the greater in view of the fact that the preceding company for "The Tavern" toward the close of its engagement was reported to be drawing \$250 a night.

Cohan is playing the part on the whole in a straight manner unusual with him, except for an occasional Cohanesque quirk of the mouth, and one cultured visitor, who ordinarily had not been a great admirer of Cohan in his earlier plays, went so far as to say he now sees possibilities of a second Manhattan hit in him.